WHAT DEPRECATES OR INFLATES YOUR SELF-IMAGE?

Life, it has been said, would be meaningless without art. Perhaps it would be too meaningful without humor.

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Abstract. The article discusses the influence of the style of humor on behavior patterns in the context of social relations. The purpose of the study is to analyze and compare the results obtained earlier in the works of both domestic and foreign researchers. The document defines the term “humor”, as well as the styles of humor and their characteristics. The study involved $N = 1000$ respondents aged from 18 to 50 years.

Keywords: humor, sense of humor, styles of humor, aggression.
Introduction

Humor styles belong to the research area of personality psychology related to the ways in which individuals differ in their use of humor in everyday life. People of all ages and backgrounds are engaged in humor, but the way they use it can vary greatly. Although humor styles can vary slightly depending on the situation, they tend to be a relatively stable personality characteristic among individuals, i.e., individuals are fairly consistent in the ways they use humor over time [1].

What is humor?

The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) was developed by Rod Martin and Patricia Doris in 2003 to measure individual differences in styles of humor [2]. Humor has been shown to be a personality characteristic that remains relatively stable over time [1]. Humor has been viewed as a one-dimensional trait. However, individuals seem to differ in the ways in which they use humor in their everyday lives, and different styles of humor seem to have different outcomes. Therefore, the Humor Styles Questionnaire was developed to identify the ways in which individuals differ in humor styles and how these differences influence health, well-being, relationships, and other outcomes [3].

Affiliate humor

People with this style tend to tell funny jokes and participate in spontaneous witty banter to entertain others and reduce interpersonal tension [4]. They can also participate in self-deprecating humor, speak funny things about themselves and not take themselves too seriously, while maintaining a sense of self-acceptance [5]. This is not a hostile use of humor, which seems to reinforce interpersonal cohesion and attractiveness for cooperation. People using this style of humor usually believe that in the future their position will be redirected to extraversion, cheerfulness, self-esteem, closeness, satisfaction and mostly positive moods, and emotions towards them from the team.

Self-enhancing humor
This includes, as a rule, a humorous external life, a tendency to be often surprised at the incompatibilities of life and to maintain a humorous mood even in the face of stress or adversity [6]. Closely related to the concept of coping humor [7], it also refers to perspective humor, [8] and a regulator of emotions or a mechanism for overcoming life's difficulties [9]. It is most consistent with the Freudian definition of humor, as a health defense mechanism that avoids negative aspects, while maintaining a realistic perspective of a potential situation [10]. Given the focus on regulating emotions through a humorous perspective, this style is associated with negative emotions, such as depression and anxiety, more generally, neuroticism, but is positively associated with comprehending inner spiritual experience, self-esteem and psychological well-being.

**Aggressive humor**

This style is often associated with the use of sarcasm, tease, ridicule, "suppression" or "humiliation" of another individual with the help of humor [11]. It also includes the use of humor to manipulate others with the perceived threat of ridicule [12]. In general, this is due to the tendency to express humor without taking into account its potential impact on others (e.g., sexual or racist humor) and includes an impulsive expression of humor in which it is difficult to resist the desire to say funny jokes that can hurt others. Most likely, this humor is connected with neuroticism and especially with hostility, anger and aggression, but in no way connected with satisfaction with relationships, acceptance and benevolence.

**Self-defeating humor**

It implies excessive self-deprecation through humor. It is an attempt to entertain others by doing or saying funny things about themselves, as a means to ingratiate or get approval, allowing themselves to be "a fool" for others, and laugh with others when they are ridiculed or humiliated. Moreover, this style involves the use of humor as a form of defensive denial or a tendency toward
humorous behavior as a way to overcome fundamental negative feelings or avoid constructive problem solving [13].

In China, a study was conducted that compared the results of samples from China and Canada based on the Humor Styles questionnaire (HSQ) Martin et al. (2003). The results of this study showed some similarities and differences in humor styles between Chinese and Canadian students. When analyzing HSQ factors, aggressive and self-deprecating humorous constructions were clearly identified. In China, aggressive expressions of humor and the concept of self-denial take on other forms than in Canada. However, some elements are different from those in the theoretical HSQ scale. In countries similar in culture, the styles of humor are almost the same, but Chinese culture is very different from Canadian, and yet some show similarities, such as aggressiveness and self-deprecation, but only with the principle that these styles of humor express themselves in other forms of relations [14].

In Lebanese culture, in contrast to North Americans, there is less of a tendency for friendly joking and laughing with one’s friends (affiliative humor) to be associated with teasing and sarcastic put-down (aggressive humor), which enhances the self at the expense of others, and a greater tendency for it to be associated with self-disparaging humor, which enhances group cohesion at the expense of the self (self-defeating humor) [16].

The study of the German version of the HSQ examined the psychometric properties in a large sample of adults, and presents its norms as a reference for future studies using this adaptation. Overall, the psychometric properties of the HSQ were similar to the original paper (Martin et al., 2003) and better than in many other translations (e.g., Bilge & Saltuk, 2007; Chen & Martin, 2007; Kazarian & Martin, 2006; Taher et al., 2008), supporting that it can be used meaningfully in German-speaking countries (at least Germany and Switzerland). The reliability of the four HSQ scales was supported in the total sample as well as in the subgroups, with the aggressive scale showing the lowest reliabilities.
Weak factorial invariance for the four-factor structure of the HSQ was supported across gender and age groups, while strong factorial invariance was supported across Switzerland and Germany. This supports the feasibility of interpreting differences in the four HSQ factors in these demographic subgroups as the items form at least the same latent structure. The empirical convergence of the HSQ scales with 10 styles of humorous conduct and eight comic styles was mixed, with some styles largely converging with the HSQ, while others were rather independent of it. This is a line with the theoretical distinctions of stylistic traits and the approaches to styles in the three humor concepts, underscoring that the usage of similar labels does not automatically imply that the constructs are interchangeable [17].

Persian verbal humor is a realistic reflection of the current socio-cultural developments in Iran. Subsequently, it implies that humor even in the form of a joke as a short narrative text should be considered seriously because regardless of the special language and the logical mechanism employed to trigger laughter, it has great potential to uncover the socio-cultural and cross-gender trends [18].

We conducted a survey on the basis of an online platform, attended by 1,000 respondents (M=40%, F=60%) aged from 18 to 50 years old, using the Russian adaptation of the Martin Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) [19].

The analysis of the survey results showed that 58.7% of the respondents use aggressive and self-defeating humor. The remaining 41.3% use affiliate and self-enhancing styles of humor. According to the results obtained, aggressive humor is more frequently used by the male respondents. The female respondents tend to have self-defeating humor. The aggressive humor scale showed approximately the same results as the scale of self-defeating humor. This may be due to a significant internal correlation between aggressive and self-defeating humor. Russians use an aggressive style of humor towards themselves and others, not willing to offend or humiliate anyone.
References


